

# USAID



**United States Agency for International Development**



CPL. MATTHEW ROBERSON/U.S. MARINE CORPS

## *Rebuilding Afghanistan*

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# Rebuilding Afghanistan

**A**fghanistan presents one of the most difficult humanitarian and development challenges the U.S. government and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have ever faced.

The former Coca-Cola bottling plant in Kabul's western neighborhood of Karte Char. This and surrounding areas were severely damaged in fighting between Mujahideen factions in the early 1990s.



Chris Brown/USAID

Years of civil war, compounded by Taliban rule and the worst drought in memory, have devastated the country. Approximately half of Afghanistan's 26.8 million people lives in absolute poverty. Malnutrition is widespread. Fifty percent of the people are unemployed—70 percent are illiterate. Virtually all of the country's institutions and much of its infrastructure have been destroyed.

Such an environment, if left untended, provides a fertile breeding ground for terrorism and other destabilizing movements. To support America's war on terrorism and to keep with America's tradition of assisting those in need, USAID has made a major commitment to build a hopeful future for the people of Afghanistan.

USAID made historic efforts during the Taliban regime and the subsequent war against terrorism to deliver critically needed assistance to the Afghan people. Even before

Sept. 11, 2001, Afghanistan was the United States' top recipient of humanitarian aid, receiving \$174 million in fiscal year 2001 before the events of last fall.

During the last several months, the United States has played a leading role in meeting the Afghans' immediate needs for food, water, shelter and medicine. The delivery of unprecedented amounts of food in record time by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), with funding from USAID, has greatly reduced the loss of life. The majority of this wheat, oil and lentils came from the United States and has fed more than 9 million men, women and children.

The United States has pledged nearly \$300 million in fiscal year 2002 for Afghan relief and reconstruction. Of this sum, \$184 million is managed by USAID. With the demise of the Taliban and the establishment of the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) in December 2001, Afghanistan is beginning to focus on recovery and reconstruction, even as the drought continues.

While emergency relief is still required, USAID is increasing reconstruction efforts. USAID has outlined four goals for reconstruction: 1) restoring food security and revitalizing agriculture and other livelihood options; 2) rebuilding the devastated educational system; 3) improving health; and 4) strengthening Afghan institutions to assure long-term stability. Of these, agriculture is a cornerstone of sustainable recovery.

USAID is working with the AIA, humanitarian organizations and the rest of the international community to begin the process of building a safe, stable society that meets the needs of its people and eliminates an environment that breeds terrorism. ■



Judy Benjamin/USAID

**A new day is dawning for Afghan girls and women. Girls now have the freedom to obtain an education. USAID is providing women with the skills and tools they need to pursue a livelihood.**



# Rehabilitating Agriculture

**T**raditionally, agriculture is the largest and most important sector of the economy in Afghanistan. Instability, coupled with the region's worst drought—four years in length—has devastated the country's food

production capacity and impoverished farmers. Although the drought will likely continue in Afghanistan for at least the next 12 to 18 months, USAID is committed to help for the long term.

Agriculture is a way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people, and USAID is helping farmers re-establish production and

become more profitable and efficient. This effort includes rehabilitating the irrigation system and providing tools, agricultural equipment, 15,000 tons of fertilizer, livestock vaccines and 7,000 tons of seed for spring planting, which could yield 125,000 metric tons of food. Over the next two years, USAID will provide a total of 48,000 metric

tons of seed, which has the potential to increase agricultural production by as much as 772,000 metric tons. These improved seed varieties are drought resistant and should increase production by 80 to 100 percent.

Farmers and small business owners have become deeply indebted during years of drought and instability. Debt drives farmers to cultivate poppy for drug trafficking and surrender their young daughters into marriage. USAID is revitalizing the rural economy by promoting the cultivation of high-value crops, such as raisins, other fruits and vegetables. Cash-for-work projects employ local Afghans to rehabilitate critical infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads and irrigation systems.

Experts also are training Afghan farmers in planting methods, crop protection, and animal husbandry. USAID is funding Mercy Corps International to plant fruit-tree nurseries, distribute saplings and establish veterinary field units.

Lack of water is the most critical constraint to reviving Afghanistan's agriculture. USAID is funding the drilling of wells, the reconstruction of local irrigation systems, the rehabilitation of the water supply, and water conservation projects. USAID's implementing partner, FOCUS, is installing wells throughout Balkh and Baghlan provinces and will construct piped water systems in Bamiyan Province. Other organizations are rehabilitating canals and reservoirs and constructing erosion barriers. USAID will fund a nationwide water-resource assessment to better understand and respond to the effects of four years of drought. ■



Afghan farmers sow newly acquired wheat seed provided by USAID.





# Enhancing Education

**E**ducation is a key building block to a stable and economically self-sufficient society. During the Taliban regime, Afghan girls above the age of 8 were banned from the classroom.

In 1999, an estimated 32 percent of Afghanistan's 4.4 million children were enrolled. Ninety-two percent of the country's girls did not attend school. Women teachers, who comprised 70 percent of the country's educators in the early 1990s, were forced to resign. Many of Afghanistan's 3,600 schools were damaged or destroyed by decades of conflict and lacked basic supplies.

For the first time in years, girls have the opportunity to obtain an education. Women teachers, once barred from the classroom—and society—have returned too. The AIA the U.S. government, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and many humanitarian organizations are working together to bring Afghan children and teachers "back to school" with textbooks, school supplies and training materials in hand.

Education benefits Afghan society both

socially and economically. A structured school environment provides youth with a sense of normalcy and routine after years of conflict. Teenagers who are engaged in learning are less likely to be recruited into militias and criminal groups. All have the opportunity to learn valuable skills that will ultimately enable Afghanistan to build a competitive workforce comprised of women as well as men. The educational system is bringing women back into the workforce and enabling them to provide for their families.

Through a \$6.5 million grant to the University of Nebraska at Omaha, USAID edited and printed nearly 10 million textbooks for science, math, reading, civics and social studies for grades one through 12. More than 5 million books were delivered by UNICEF under the AIA's Back-to-School Program in time for opening day,

March 23. The textbooks are printed in the Afghan languages of Pashtu and Dari and are accompanied by teachers' kits and other school supplies.

USAID is funding five teams of four teacher trainers to conduct two-week refresher courses. By the end of 2002, thousands of Afghan educators, many of whom are women, will receive this training.

As part of its food-for-education program, WFP, with USAID support, is providing nutritious food to 47,000 schoolchildren in Kabul and northeastern Afghanistan. One million children will be reached as the program expands nationwide. Girls receive five liters of vegetable oil every month as an incentive for regular school attendance. The program reduces dropout rates, increases school attendance, and encourages families to send girls to school.

USAID, working through WFP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is rehabilitating more than 600 schools and enabling women-run bakeries to provide bread to schoolchildren. Approximately 50,000 teachers are receiving monthly food packages to supplement their income, through a food-for-civil-servants program introduced across the country. This program is part of USAID's \$100 million comprehensive support to WFP's efforts in Afghanistan.

A USAID-funded program is encouraging Afghan women and girls to read by hosting reading classes and improving the country's libraries. USAID is funding the training of library staff and supplying books. ■



Cpl. Matthew Roberson/U.S. Marine Corps

For the first time in years, Afghan girls have the opportunity to gain an education. Most communities in Afghanistan conduct the school year from late March through December in deference to the cold winters. USAID is working with the AIA and the United Nations to ensure that students have textbooks, nourishing meals and functional schools.



# Improving Health

**O**ne of every four Afghan children dies before the age of 5. This child mortality rate is among the highest in the world and adults face an average life expectancy of 46 years.

There is currently one physician for every 50,000 people and an estimated 40 percent of the Afghan population has no access to primary health care services.

Vaccination rates for many preventable diseases among the country's 11 million children have fallen to dangerously low levels in recent years. Less than half of the country's children have been vaccinated against measles—a disease that kills an average of 35,000 Afghan children each year.

USAID is spending \$16.7 million to improve the basic health and nutrition of Afghans, particularly women, children and displaced persons. It is bringing basic health serv-

ices and health education to under-served communities, focusing on maternal and child health, hygiene, water and sanitation, immunization and control of infectious diseases. In these programs, women are the primary recipients of services, as well as the providers of health care.

USAID is providing \$5 million to help rebuild the health care system and support the Ministry of Public Health. It is training and equipping community health care workers, rehabilitating health facilities, and working to establish a health surveillance system to meet the needs of the Afghan people.

Since October 2000, USAID has con-

tributed more than \$8 million to address Afghanistan's water and sanitation needs. This includes funding the drilling of wells and rehabilitation of water sources, the installation of pipelines and the construction of hand pumps and pit latrines. Afghans have received water purification tablets, soap and drinking water as well as education about safe hygiene practices, sanitation and waste disposal.

USAID funded the vaccination of more than 2 million children against measles as part of a joint UNICEF/World Health Organization campaign. These children received vitamin A capsules that will enhance their chance of survival from childhood illnesses. USAID also is funding a polio-eradication campaign.

To combat diarrheal disease, USAID is funding a nationwide multimedia health education campaign and the marketing of commodities to help prevent and treat diarrheal illness, including oral rehydration treatment.

USAID is programming \$1 million from the Leahy War Victims Fund to support the social and economic rehabilitation and integration of land mine victims and other disabled people. These funds also will provide training and specialized technical expertise to Afghan orthopedic technologists. Using funds set aside for victims of torture, USAID will also begin to address the burden of mental illness in the war-devastated population of Afghanistan. ■



USAID

**Health workers from the International Medical Corps treat Afghan women and children.**



# Creating Jobs

**A** healthy economy is a key foundation for a stable society. USAID is strengthening Afghanistan's economy by creating jobs that enable Afghans to support their families and help rebuild their country.

In fiscal years 2001 and 2002, USAID has provided more than \$25 million in support of humanitarian assistance projects with a cash-for-work or food-for-work component. USAID is creating nearly 3 million jobs—1.8 million food-for-work and 1.1 million cash-for-work positions, ranging in duration from two weeks to nine months. Local Afghans receive cash or food payments for providing services that benefit entire communities, such as repairing infrastructure.

As part of the reactivation of the rural economy, 45,000 short-term jobs are being created in areas where poppy is cultivated. Afghan workers are rehabilitating irrigation

systems, farm-to-market roads, village schools and clinics.

Through a \$736,544 USAID grant to Shelter for Life, Afghans have been hired to repair some of the worst portions of a road connecting Kunduz and Takhar provinces in the northeast.

USAID has provided \$700,000 to help Afghans begin small-scale income-generating activities at the village level, such as growing kitchen gardens, embroidering, producing cheese and yogurt and crafting shoes.

USAID is working with the French humanitarian organization Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development

(ACTED) to support the establishment of a women's center on the Shomali Plains. The center provides basic education, health instruction, and training for income-generating projects such as making clothing and quilts for distribution to hospitals, orphanages, schools and families. ACTED is opening four more centers in Kabul, Pul-e-Khumri, Maimaneh, and Taloqan, which will benefit more than 5,000 women.

WFP, with funding from USAID, is operating bakeries that employ Afghan widows and, at the same time, provide heavily subsidized bread to Afghanistan's urban poor—particularly women and children. At least 250,000 people will be assisted in 2002. With support from USAID, WFP is working to expand this innovative program to other provinces. ■



JEANNE PRYOR/USAID

**In Charikar, Taloqan, and Maimana, USAID is employing 3,200 Afghan widows to sew quilts and clothing as part of an income-generating project. The women also receive basic health education and English language training.**





# Strengthening Institutions

**T**o ensure success, reconstruction efforts must have Afghan ownership and build upon Afghan traditions and practices. Ethnic balance is also a key feature. USAID support seeks to build upon and increase

existing Afghan capacities, both in the non-governmental and governmental sectors to reinforce democracy and stability. USAID is funding programs that enhance the nascent government's credibility. These efforts include dismantling the opium market and providing opportunities for legitimate commerce and trade. Institutional strengthening will contribute to improved civil-military relations and the emergence of a robust civil society as well.

Support is needed to ensure that the upcoming *loya jirga*, a traditional Afghan forum for selecting political leadership, proceeds openly and democratically. USAID is providing logistical and communications support for the AIA and the *loya jirga*, including international election observers and information on the process via different media outlets.

To build local capacity, USAID is funding local initiatives that help communities meet

their needs, define priorities, and rehabilitate local infrastructure such as village-to-market roads and government facilities.

To promote rule of law and protect basic rights, USAID is providing logistical and technical assistance to enhance formal systems of justice in coordination with the United Nations and donor governments.

At the same time, USAID is engaged in the rehabilitation of the Central Bank and the reform of the government's financial management system in close cooperation with other U.S. government agencies and international financial institutions. ■



Nitin Madhav/USAID



Nitin Madhav/USAID

**Young and old alike dream of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Afghan men work with irrigation tubing. A young boy waves the new Afghan flag.**



# Rebuilding Infrastructure

**A**fghanistan has suffered immense physical destruction. Returning Afghan refugees are likely to find their homes or businesses reduced to piles of rubble and crumbling foundations.

The AIA, anxious to start providing goods and services to its citizens, is hampered by a basic lack of office space from which to operate. Civil society, media and local government likewise cannot function without adequate infrastructure.

USAID is responding to this urgent need by launching 27 medium- and small-scale reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. These projects enable the initiation of critical

services, such as education, transport and the provision of clean water. They also provide Afghans with tangible proof that a new phase in Afghanistan's history—characterized by a responsive government—has begun.

USAID is providing nine grants totaling \$5.7 million for spot reconstruction of critical infrastructure, including roads, clinics, mills, canals, markets and schools. Many of these projects, spread throughout Afghanistan, use cash-for-work and food-for-work incentives which employ Afghans to complete the necessary work, thus stimulating the local economy.

[left] In partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Public Works and ACTED, USAID funded the rehabilitation of the Salang Tunnel and the creation of an innovative traffic control system.

[below] One of 10 bullet-pocked classrooms USAID is rehabilitating at the Kabul Teacher Training College.

USAID is working with the Ministry of Education and IOM to reconstruct schools and universities. These include a \$140,000 project to rebuild the Kabul Teacher Training College. In addition, USAID is reconstructing Bamiyan University and rehabilitating three schools in Kabul and one in Mazar-e-Sharif.

USAID is providing infrastructure and equipment for key ministries of the AIA, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

USAID is rehabilitating three hospitals, one in Kandahar and two in Kabul. The Kandahar hospital, which is the primary health facility for Kandahar and three neighboring provinces, was damaged during recent fighting.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Irrigation is unable to function with its antiquated equipment, and this is jeopardizing the availability of drinking water. With USAID funding, the ministry will receive critical drilling equipment. Water sources are being rehabilitated in southwestern Baglan and northeastern Bamiyan as well.

USAID, through ACTED, rehabilitated the Salang Tunnel, thus opening a major supply route, that enables greater quantities of goods, services and humanitarian aid to flow more quickly from commercial centers to Afghan populations. The re-opening of the tunnel has shortened the trip between Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif by as much as 14 hours. Hundreds of vehicles per day are now using the tunnel.

As part of its commitment to jumpstart mass media in Afghanistan, USAID is providing funding to rehabilitate a journalist-training center, which will train up to 500 local journalists over the next few years. In addition, USAID is rehabilitating an independent media center, which will house production facilities for a daily independent newspaper and provide a meeting space for local journalists. ■



Jeanne Pryor/USAID



Jeanne Pryor/USAID





# Restoring Media

**A**fghanistan is a radio culture. Well before the civil war began in 1978-79, Afghans listened to radio—especially music—in their villages as a primary form of entertainment.



IOM

**Afghans hold two of 30,000 radios supplied by USAID and the IOM that enabled them to hear news and bulletins concerning food distribution, humanitarian aid and security.**



IOM

Under the Taliban regime, people were forbidden to listen to music. News and information were tightly controlled, and communities were isolated.

USAID is working with the AIA, and other Afghan and international organizations to rebuild communications and journalistic capacity with the goal of informing and uniting Afghanistan's people to help produce a peaceful, stable, and viable political transition and administration.

USAID is supporting a broad range of media activities to provide coverage and educate the public about the loya jirga, a traditional forum for choosing political leadership. USAID is providing Radio Afghanistan with satellite equipment and access to short-wave transmitters to extend Radio Kabul to the entire country. This will enable loya jirga programming to reach throughout the country. USAID has provided a technical advisor and other support to the Loya Jirga Commission to enable the production of loya jirga radio education programs. The Baltic Media Center has been funded to produce, in close association with Radio Afghanistan, a special daily program on the loya jirga.

USAID is spending \$1 million through Internews to train and equip local Afghan journalists to report on political, social and economic issues. A journalist training seminar in May 2002 emphasized political reporting, and students will use the loya jirga in June as a major opportunity to employ their new skills. Internews will continue to train journalists throughout the year and provide support to the reform of Afghanistan's media, legal and regulatory laws.

Through Internews, USAID is funding an office of public information for the AIA. An Afghan expatriate with skills as a public information officer has returned to Afghanistan and will provide the AIA with advanced capacity for public outreach.

USAID is providing funds to the Voice of America (VOA) for the salaries of 10 Dari- and Pashtu-speaking service correspondents to expand news coverage for the VOA inside Afghanistan. ■



# Empowering Women



Afghan widows prepare bread in USAID-funded bakeries operated by WFP. The bakeries provide bread to schoolchildren and the urban poor.

**A**fghan women enjoyed a long history of freedom and education before the Taliban assumed power in 1996. Women were deans of universities, government ministers and members of the

country's highest legislative body. During the Taliban regime, Afghan women were shunned from public life, prohibited from working outside the home, and punished for showing their faces. Education, both traditional and vocational, was forbidden. The rates of depression and trauma-related illnesses among women living under Taliban rule were among the highest in the world.

A great number of highly educated, skilled women fled the country during the last decade. USAID is committed to helping the AIA build a nation where women have the freedom and the resources to pursue an education and a livelihood.

The situation of women in Afghanistan has improved markedly since the fall of the

Taliban, but much work remains. Through U.S. government and international community support of the AIA and the humanitarian community, many girls are returning to school with textbooks in hand. Women are returning to the university and have a newly rehabilitated dormitory in which to live and study. Many women now have access to health clinics and are being trained to meet the health and nutritional needs of their families.

USAID is giving Afghan women the education, skills and tools they need to obtain jobs, support their families and integrate into the political and public life of this new stage in Afghanistan's history.

USAID, through IOM, is rehabilitating the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs building

complex and providing support for technical advisors to assist the ministry in establishing operations and developing programs. USAID will fund the establishment of a women's resource center in the ministry, which will offer Internet access and include a library of print and video material on women's health and other critical issues.

USAID and IOM are rehabilitating the offices of Ariana, a national women's non-governmental organization that provides educational and vocational courses to women and girls. The grant provides training supplies and equipment and will increase the organization's ability to provide training and educational courses.

The USAID-funded Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is providing returning refugees with job skills, including managerial training, to enhance women's abilities to achieve economic independence. AWN is also training women to participate in the *loya jirga*, or grand council.

In addition to these specific initiatives, USAID's entire reconstruction program for Afghanistan emphasizes women's participation and benefit. For example, teacher-training and textbook-distribution programs benefit women teachers and girls' schools, among others. USAID's health program focuses particularly on maternal and child health issues. ■